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UNCLASSIFIED

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

TELEPHONE

436

DATE: October 25, 1957
4:10 p.m.

SUBJECT: Guatemalan Situation.

ENCLOSURE POOR QUALITY

PARTICIPANTS: The Honorable Edward J. Sparks, American Ambassador to Guatemala;
Mr. C. Allan Stewart, Acting Director, Office of Middle American Affairs.

FOR: American Embassy, Guatemala; ARA (2); MID/PM; ARA/P; OLI (2)

DECLASSIFICATION DATE 6/4/75
PER Fondren OFFICE ARA
FADRC FOI CASE NO. 5-B-201

I telephoned Ambassador Sparks around 4:10 p.m. and he reported that the situation in Guatemala City was extremely tense. He said at that moment Ydigoras and the Archbishop were meeting with the military Junta in an effort to work out some agreement on new elections. A large, shouting Ydigoras crowd was in front of the National Palace, where the meeting was being held, and trucks loaded with up to 50 people were parked on side streets around the Palace.

The situation was particularly tense because the military Junta was unwilling to accept Ydigoras' formula to have the second Vice President replace the Junta and stage elections. Ydigoras' scornful remarks about the head of the Junta during a radio speech last night further complicated any agreement between the militaries and Ydigoras. Ambassador Sparks thought that a decision would be reached by 5:00 p.m. Guatemalan time (7:00 p.m. Washington time). The Ambassador reported that there were no police or troops on the street; that all were confined to their quarters. No busses were running and all business houses were closed. The Ambassador added that the four ODECA Ambassadors who are offering their good offices in settling the impasse were very "discouraged" about the situation. Ambassador Sparks said that the Partido Revolucionario had attempted to get itself legalized as a party so it could participate in the next elections but that based on the Department's telegram 217 he had made a strong protest to the Junta to prevent this development. (The Partido Revolucionario supported Ydigoras in the election and was partly responsible for the large number of votes he received in Guatemala City.) Ambassador Sparks said he understood that the Partido Revolucionario was organizing a manifestation of its own for this afternoon and by so doing would remove from Ydigoras a substantial amount of street support that he had been receiving. If this should occur, the Ambassador said, some pressure would be taken off the Junta, since Ydigoras would not be as strongly supported as before.

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I asked the status of American citizens in Guatemala and he said there were no demonstrations whatsoever against Americans as yet, nothing had occurred to any of them but he was watching the situation and would take action if necessary.

He said that ex-President Gonzalez had left the country and he understood the MDN candidate Ortiz also had done likewise. I asked what activity would be taken by the MDN people and he said that there were evidences that after a period of "laying low" they were beginning to do something. Ambassador Sparks was asked about the Guatemalan exiles and he said that he had heard Guillermo Toriello was in town. He explained that Ydigoras had indicated that exiles might return.

The Ambassador said that he would call the Department by telephone around 7:00 p.m. Washington time, when he thought it would be possible to report on the meeting taking place at the Palace. He cautioned that telephone calls were being monitored by Guatemalan authorities.

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ARA:MID:CAStewart:lrb